

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-10 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00

EB-08 FRB-03 INR-10 NSAE-00 ICA-11 TRSE-00 XMB-02

OPIC-03 SP-02 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 DODE-00 PM-05

H-01 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01 SS-15 IO-13 HA-05 STR-07

AGRE-00 /142 W

-----114014 161759Z /42

P R 161420Z MAY 78

FM AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6799

INFO AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

AMEMBASSY CARACAS

AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

AMEMBASSY BERLIN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO

AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 GEORGETOWN 1563

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PDIP, PEPR, GY

SUBJECT: PRIME MINISTER OUTLINES TO PRESS RESULTS OF TRIP TO USSR,
GDR, N. KOREA AND LONDON, AND REVEALS SOME PROPOSALS
OF NEW CONSTITUTION

REF: GEORGETOWN 1560

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: IN AN HOUR LONG PRESS CONFERENCE HELD
MAY 13 PRIME MINISTER FORBES BURNHAM SUMMARIZED THE RESULTS OF
HIS FOUR WEEK TRIP ENDING MAY 8 TO THE SOVIET UNION, NORTH KOREA,
THE GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC AND THE UNITED KINGDOM. HE
REVEALED AS WELL ADDITIONAL DETAILS OF HIS RULING PEOPLE'S
NATIONAL CONGRESS (PNC) PARTY'S HIGHLY CONTROVERSIAL PROPOSALS
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FOR A NEW CONSTITUTION FOR GUYANA AND HOW HE FORESAW ITS
ESTABLISHMENT. END SUMMARY.

2. BURNHAM ADDED A FEW DETAILS TO THE SKETCHY INFORMATION
PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED ON THE ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE AND
COOPERATIONS AGREEMENTS CONCLUDED IN THE USSR, NORTH
KOREA AND THE GDR (SEPTELS). MOST NOTABLE WAS THE REVELA-

TION THAT THERE IS CURRENTLY IN GUYANA A SOVIET TEAM WORKING ON THE DETAILS OF A PROJECT TO "TREBLE THE PRESENT OUT PUT OF 300,000 TONS" ANNUALLY OF GUYANESE ALUMINA. (BURNHAM WAS NOT ASKED, HOWEVER, NOR DID HE VOLUNTEER, WHY THE TWO -COMMUNIQUE WITH THE USSR AND THE GDR CONCLUDED DURING THE TRIP HAVE NOT TO DATE BEEN PUBLISHED IN GUYANA ALTHOUGH THEY HAVE BEEN PUBLISHED ABROAD.)

3. ACCORDING TO THE PRIME MINISTER THE PNC DRAFT FOR A NEW CONSTITUTION WILL PROVIDE FOR AN EXECUTIVE PRESIDENT WHO WILL BE THE LEADER OF THE MAJORITY PARTY (WHO, HE ADMITTED IN RESPONDING TO A QUESTION, MIGHT CONCEIVABLY BE HIMSELF). THE CONSTITUTION WILL DECLARE THAT EACH CITIZEN IS ENTITLED TO WORK, EDUCATION, FREE MEDICAL ATTENTION AND TO LEISURE TIME, AS WELL AS THE RIGHT TO LIFE, PERSONAL PROPERTY, AND INHERITANCE. "THERE WILL, HOWEVER, BE AN END TO THE EXPLOITATIVE USE OF LAND," HE SAID. (DETAILS SEPTTEL)

4. WHEN ASKED BY THE EDITOR OF THE WEEKLY "CATHOLIC STANDARD" TO EXPLAIN WHY THE PRINCIPAL DAILY, THE GOVERNMENT OWNED "CHRONICLE," REFUSED TO PUBLISH EVEN AS PAID ADVERTISEMENTS THE STATEMENTS OF A GROUP OF LAWYERS AND THE COUNCIL OF CHURCHES OPPOSING THE REFERENDUM, BURNHAM SAID THE PAPER WOULD NOT ACCEPT PAID POLITICAL STATEMENTS BECAUSE THAT WOULD MEAN THAT ONLY THE CONFIDENTIAL

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RICH COULD AFFORD TO HAVE THEIR VIEWS PUBLICIZED. "AS A SOCIALIST GOVERNMENT," HE SAID, "WE WILL NOT PERMIT THIS DISCRIMINATION IN FAVOR OF PROPERTY."

5. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION POSED BY THE MIRROR (ORGAN OF THE OPPOSITION PEOPLE'S PROGRESSIVE PARTY), BURNHAM DENIED THAT HE HAD SAID WHILE IN LONDON THAT THERE WOULD BE NO NATIONALIZATION OF FUTURE PRIVATE FOREIGN INVESTMENT IN GUYANA, SAYING THAT WHAT HE HAD SAID WAS THAT THE TERMS OF ANY POSSIBLE TAKEOVER WOULD BE WORKED OUT BEFORE AN INVESTMENT IS MADE. IN RESPONSE TO A FOLLOW-ON QUESTION AS TO WHETHER BANKS AND INSURANCE COMPANIES WOULD BE NATIONALIZED, BURNHAM SAID "WHEN THE TIME FOR THAT COMES, I SHALL ANNOUNCE IT." (INTERESTINGLY, PRESS REPORTS OF THE PRESS CONFERENCE REFERRRD ONLY TO "FOREIGN BANKS HERE" AND NOT TO INSURANCE COMPANIES, MOST OF WHICH ARE WELL-ESTABLISHED LOCALLY OWNED FIRMS.)

6. TURNING TO THE DOMESTIC ECONOMIC SITUATION AND THE SHORTAGES OF BASIC FOODSTUFFS AND COMMODITIES, THE PRIME MINISTER EXPRESSED THE BELIEF THAT THERE WOULD BE RELATIVELY RAPID IMPROVEMENT, BUT WARNED AGAINST THE DANGER OF WELL-OFF

INDIVIDUALS PURCHASING MORE THAN THEY NEEDED FOR THE PURPOSE OF AGGRAVATING THE SHORTAGES AND THEREBY FOMENTING DISCONTENT AMONG THE PEOPLE. HE KNEW, HE SAID, FROM FIRST HAND REPORTS OF AN UNNAMED FRIEND THAT "THIS IS THE SAME TECHNIQUE THAT THE REACTIONARIES USED AGAINST ALLENDE IN CHILE."

7. BURNHAM SAID THAT HE FAVORED A CARICOM HEADS OF GOVERNMENT MEETING, ALTHOUGH HE DID NOT THINK THAT CARICOM WOULD COLLAPSE WITHOUT ONE, AND THAT HE THOUGHT CARICOM MEETINGS OF LESSER OFFICIALS ARE USEFUL. WHEN ASKED ABOUT NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE IMF, BURNHAM SAID SIMPLE THAT "THESE DISCUSSIONS CONTINUE."

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 GEORGETOWN 1563

8. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH THE PRESS CONFERENCE DID LITTLE TO REASSURE THOSE UNHAPPY WITH THE CURRENT ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES AND DID LESS TO REASSURE THOSE CONCERNED WITH FUTURE POLITICAL PROSPECTS, IT DID, AS IT WAS PROBABLY MEANT TO DO, DEMONSTRATE TO BOTH THE PARTY FAITHFUL AND THE CITIZENRY THAT L.F.S. BURNHAM IS BACK AND IS BACK IN CHARGE. HE RADIATED ASSURANCE AND, PERHAPS INADVERTENTLY,

A LITTLE ARROGANCE. HE ATTEMPTED TO CONVEY THAT THE ECONOMIC FRUITS OF HIS TRIP ABROAD WOULD SOON BECOME APPARENT IN THE BETTERMENT OF DAILY LIVING CONDITIONS, UNLESS UPSET BY REACTIONARIES AT HOME OR IMPERIALIST MACHINATIONS FROM ABROAD. WHILE PROMISING HIS LISTENERS THAT THE NEW CONSTITUTION WILL BE DISCUSSED MORE WIDELY AND AT GREATER LENGTH THAN ANY SUCH DOCUMENT IN GUYANESE
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HISTORY, HE IMPLIED UNMISTAKABLY HIS INTENTION THAT THE PROCESS AND ITS CONCLUSION ARE ALL BUT FOREORDAINED. FROM THE OCCASIONAL LATIN APHORISM TO THE CAREFULLY PRONOUNCED FRENCH PHRASE, IT WAS A VIRTUOSO PERFORMANCE-- AND PURE BURNHAM.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS CONFERENCES, HEAD OF GOVERNMENT VISITS, CONSTITUTIONAL REFERENDUM
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 16 may 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978GEORGE01563
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780206-1061
Format: TEL
From: GEORGETOWN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780555/aaaabuqf.tel
Line Count: 189
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: d452c19c-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 GEORGETOWN 1560
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 17 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2681412
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRIME MINISTER OUTLINES TO PRESS RESULTS OF TRIP TO USSR, GDR, N. KOREA AND LONDON, AND REVEALS SOME PROPOSALS OF NEW CONSITUTION
TAGS: PDIP, PEPR, OVIP, SOPN, PINT, GY, UR, KN, GC, UK, (BURNHAM, L F S)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/d452c19c-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014